

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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MAXWELL OHIKHUARE, M.D.  
Health Officer

## San Bernardino County Health Status Report, 2009

**San Bernardino.** Today kicked off the annual National Public Health Week celebration in San Bernardino County. Maxwell Ohikhuare, M.D., Health Officer with the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health presented the County Health Status Report at the Board of Supervisor's meeting.

"Our ultimate goal is to make San Bernardino County one of the healthiest in the nation. We envision our County as a place where a healthy lifestyle is celebrated," said Dr. Ohikhuare "We want to make it easy for communities to make healthy choices every day. If we each commit to promoting good health in our communities, we can create a ripple effect across our neighborhoods and cities."

Emerging epidemics continue to pose a threat to health and an already strained public health system. The first case of H1N1 was reported in April, 2009 and currently there have been 45 confirmed / probable H1N1 deaths in San Bernardino County. Over 718,136 county residents have been vaccinated due to a countywide organized effort by the Department's Preparedness and Response Program. Through surveillance, media campaigns and vaccination clinics in local communities and schools the number of H1N1 cases continue to decline.

Communicable diseases have a direct connection to all of us, in the most personal way. The Department's Epidemiology and Environmental Health Programs continue to mitigate the consequences of Tuberculosis and West Nile Virus in the County. There has been a decline in the number of human infections from West Nile virus from 42 in 2008 to 2 in 2009. (Reported Incidence of West Nile virus illness, CA, 2008, 2009) "We have to continue our efforts to reduce the number of cases from communicable diseases and avoid resurgence in our County," stated Dr. Ohikhuare.

The Department's Healthy Communities project has formed partnerships with fourteen cities in San Bernardino County that have made a commitment to improve the health of their residents. These cities include Adelanto, Apple Valley, Chino, Chino Hills, Colton, Fontana, Hesperia, Montclair, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, Rialto, San Bernardino, and Victorville. "It is taking small steps, whether it's going for a 30-minute walk most days of the week, e-mailing a friend a healthy

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Gregory C. Devereaux  
County Administrative Officer

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JOSIE GONZALES.....Fifth District

recipe, or riding a bike to school or work,” said Dr. Ohikhuare.

Dr. Ohikhuare noted a slight improvement in reduction to births to teenage mothers. He said “we have to maintain vigilance by continuing education and advocacy among adolescents to discourage unwanted pregnancies.” He also noted improvements in access to preventive services through better coordination and implementation of cost effective measures in public health clinics.

“By working together, we can foster awareness of the importance of all aspects of public health to our community,” said Dr. Ohikhuare. It involves outreach to policy makers and engaging the community to think broadly about how to improve their health on a larger scale. By committing to support the local public health system, County residents can build on existing strengths and resources, to establish the solid foundation needed for a healthier San Bernardino County.

For more information or to access public health services, contact County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health at (800) 782-4264. You can also visit the department website at <http://sbcounty.gov/dph>.

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